Advent Meditation
Week 3 - Joy

Listen in the silence. Listen in the noise.
*Listen for the sound of the Spirit's voice.**

Before we begin: This is the third week in Advent and now there are only two candles in the illustration. This year we are doing the work of quieting and silencing in order to listen for God's voice. We began with all the lights lit, then each week we will quiet another candle to illustrate our goal of focusing and listening only for God-with-us: Emmanuel.

Invocation

Joy to the world! God of joy we are listening for your laughter! Bring it into this place and fill us with your joy! Let it fill our hearts and overflow onto everyone we meet.

Confession

For some of us, Lord, this idea of joy is hard. We think it is about always being happy. And while we know that happiness is part of joy, it takes a lifetime of turning back to you for us to find the kind of enduring joy that can hold even sorrow in its embrace. Be patient with us, Lord, as we struggle to listen for your joy in every corner of our lives.

Psalm 126:2-3

Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with shouts of joy; then it was said among the nations, "The Lord has done great things for them." The Lord has done great things for us, and we rejoiced.

1 Thessalonians 5:16-23

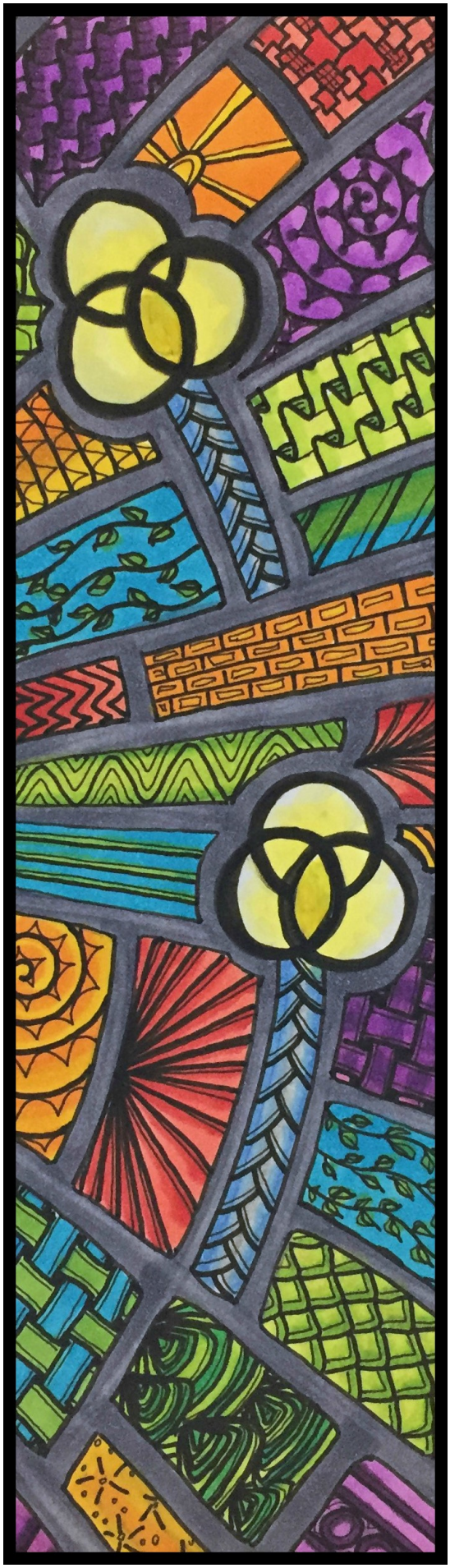
Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ for you. Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise the words of the prophets, but test everything; hold fast to what is good; abstain from every form of evil. May the God of peace himself sanctify you entirely; and may your spirit and soul and body be kept sound and blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Prayer

Leader: Creator God, we give you thanks and praise that you created laughter! It is one of your best ideas! Help us to share your joy. When we cannot hear laughter in others, give us wisdom to wait and listen.
All: Help us to listen in the silence.

Leader: Christ, there is a lot of false laughing and joy in our society. Some of it is cruel or taunting laughter. Help us to "test everything and hold fast to what is good." Help us to hear your laughter and to share your smile with others.
All: Help us to listen in the noise.

Leader: Holy Spirit, laughter is meant to be shared. Joy is only joy with it is given away. Give us energy to bring your laughter and your love to all people.
All: Help us to listen for the sound of your voice. Amen.



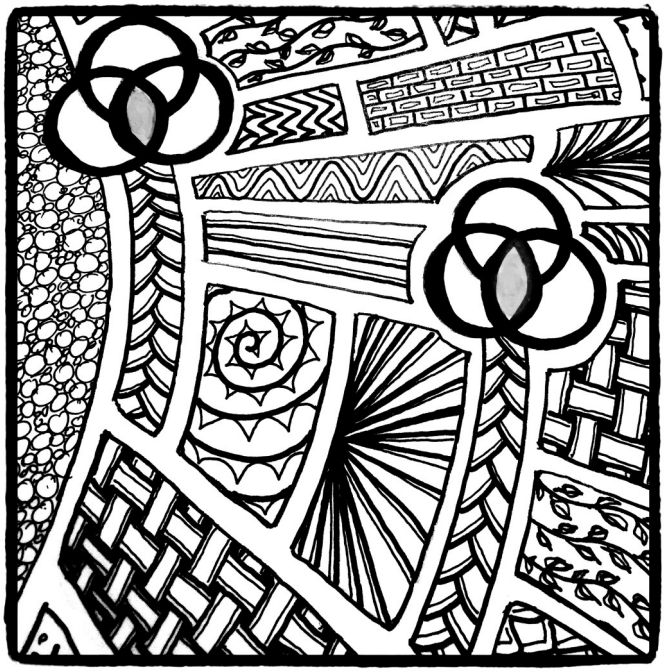
A time to be still

You are invited into a time of silence. Take a deep breath and exhale slowly.

Poetry is the practice of silencing the extra words so that feelings can shine. This year we are exploring poetry as a spiritual practice. By slowing down, pondering, and picking words, we can better hear what God is saying to us.

Today let's write limericks. Just for fun. A limerick has 5 lines; lines 1, 2, and 5 rhyme and lines 3 and 4 rhyme.

There was a good man named Paul
Who wrote of God's good news to all
He prayed without ceasing
While new tents was leasing
And taking great joy in it, y'all!



Remember that this is not a contest. There is no grade. It is just a time to hang out with God and write down what comes to mind.

Read over your poem and then sit quietly with it, or color the illustration.

A blessing

May God speak to us in the silence.
May God speak to us above the noise.
May we always listen for the sound of the Spirit's voice.

**Listen in the Silence used with permission of singer/songwriter Linnea Good, www.LinneaGood.com.*